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just at the point where he requires to peg or "dowel" his joint. The same danger also threatens the curved leg, particularly when the curve is unusually great.

The strongest form that can be given to the back of a chair is where the two upright pieces are straight, or nearly so, and the cross pieces also straight, and mortised into the side uprights.

The legs of a chair are fixed in two ways. Either they are pegged up into the seat framing, as in light caned or bedroom chairs, or else the ends of the seat rails are mortised into the upper part or square shoulder of the leg, which is by far the strongest way of framing, and should be employed for dining-room chairs, and whenever the seat of the chair is stuffed. Where the legs are only "pegged" it is necessary to strengthen them by rails from one to the other, but with a chair properly framed these are not essential, though of course they add to its strength, and, artistically, they give a balance to the chair and prevent it looking top-heavy. Besides, it enables us to dispense with a clumsier leg than necessary.

The question whether a house should be furnished throughout in one style, or whether each room may represent a different period, is easily disposed of. A house should be furnished throughout harmoniously, and not be a series of violent contrasts in style. A house is the home of an individual possessing character, mind, will, and, it is to be hoped, certain definite principles; and therefore, except in the case of persons of Quixotic temperament and kaleidoscopic mental vision, should not be a succession of "Jack-in-the-box" surprises.

#### FASHIONABLE PRICES FOR FURNITURE.

It is gratifying to note the progress made by some substantial but unpretentious New York furniture houses in the general character of their work, as viewed not only from an artistic stand-point, but also on the score of honest workmanship. Their prices are reasonable, out of all proportion to those of the more fashionable dealers, whose work often is not nearly so creditable. Persons who insist on buying cheap imitations of expensive styles, of course, have nobody but themselves to blame if they have cause to repent of their bargains; but those willing to pay a fair price for good designs and durable workmanship can do no better than make their purchases at some of these houses, and if they choose to pay the price for extra quality of material and labor, they can get the best in the market by making arrangements to that effect. There is certainly no reason for the public paying the exorbitant prices charged by a few of the decorators and cabinet-makers who happen at present to be "the fashion" in New York. On the strength of their names they frequently add two and three hundred per cent to their charges above what would be a fair remuneration for their services. Good cabinet work, of course, commands a good price, but we happen to know that the same workmen are often employed at the same wages by different houses which vary from one to two hundred per cent in their charges to their customers for the very same articles of manufacture.

#### THE NATURAL IN ART.

WE are continually told to go to "nature" as the infallible guide in all questions pertaining to art, whether pictorial or decorative, and it is not improbable that a great many errors of naturalistic design have resulted from an entire misconception of the meaning of the advice given. If we content ourselves with blindly copying nature, we shall merely reproduce isolated fragments of nature's handiwork in the wrong place. We must go to nature, not as mere copyists, but as reasoning intelligent beings, with the endeavor to understand the laws by which she is governed and the principles on which she invariably works.

We may not, by looking at a tree, see exactly how to construct a chair; nor, by studying a rose, learn how to design a wall-paper. Yet, by observing how the main branches of a tree strike out from the parent stem, and how, from these, the more slender offshoots are thrown out in irregular and yet harmonious lines, we may gather some notions of fitness and exquisite adaptability—of a combination of strength and lightness and elasticity—a maximum of force with a minimum of expen-

diture, every part supporting or supported by some other part; nothing superfluous, no waste, no reckless prodigality of resource. Here we have the essence of constructive art—the utmost strength of which the material is capable; the structural formation clearly perceptible without being ugly or obtrusive; every part having relation to every other part. You perceive the tree hitherto (the trunk and the branches) has merely the beauty of proportion, of fitness, of vigor, and balance of parts. But as these elements constitute rather a relative beauty, it is necessary, for the ultimate perfection of the tree, that it should assume a positive beauty, hence the blossom, the leaves, and the fruit; outgrowths, mark, of the construction, interwoven, so to speak, in the whole scheme; no mere adjuncts, but clothing the branches, with a perfectly natural, seemingly inevitable species of ornament, yet never entirely concealing the anatomy of the tree, only marking still more distinctly its perfect grace and applicability, till, from the fibres which strike into the earth to the trembling leaf that points the slenderest stem, this work of a mightier hand than man's stands out a miracle of consummate perfection, of workmanship past mortal skill, of beauty beyond possibility of human rivalry.

The difficulty, of course, is to interpret and codify—if we may so speak—the laws of nature, so as to render them applicable to purposes of construction and decoration.

A rose-tree in full bloom is a thing of beauty, but it by no means follows that, repeated at regular intervals thirty or forty times over a wall, it will convey the same sense of beauty. Nature never acts thus; besides, there are conditions of atmosphere and of distance which mitigate out-door effects of distance by moderating and toning down colors.

#### ETCHING ON MARBLE, STONE, AND IVORY.

IN France and Germany etching on marble, lithographic stone, and ivory has been introduced lately as an artistic occupation for ladies. A great number of ornamental articles in marble or stone, such as table-tops, teapot and bottle stands, vases, paper-weights, caskets, etc., as well as buttons, solitaires, paper-knives, and the covers of note, card, and cigar cases or purses, can be effectively decorated in this manner. The proceeding is very simple. The materials and appliances required consist of asphalt varnish, nitric acid, bees-wax, and some glazed vessels of common earthenware in various sizes. Outline and flat ornaments in geometrical style, and scroll or figure work without shading, are the most easy to etch.

The design has to be sketched or transferred with pencil to the marble, stone, or ivory. The parts which are intended to remain white are then covered with asphalt varnish by means of a brush, care being taken to keep well within the outlines. After the asphalt varnish has become thoroughly dry, the acid is applied to the surface. For this purpose the article, if flat, is surrounded by a border of beeswax, to form a sort of trough, in which the etching fluid, consisting of two parts of water and one part of nitric acid, is poured, and which is placed in a glazed earthenware vessel, to prevent the work-table being soiled. The action of the diluted acid on the parts not protected by the asphalt varnish commences immediately, and five to twenty minutes are sufficient to effect the biting in. During the operation the varnish layer must be carefully watched. If the varnish should peel off in some parts, the article has to be taken out of the acid bath immediately, washed in pure water, dried with a soft cloth, and the damage repaired, repeating the immersion only after the restored parts have become thoroughly dry. The etching completed, the asphalt varnish is removed with oil of turpentine.

Articles with a curved surface, like vases, cups, etc., after having been prepared with the asphalt varnish, are placed on suitable supports of glass or glazed clay, in glazed earthenware vessels, deep enough to allow the covering of the surface which is to be etched with pure water. To the water nitric acid, under constant stirring, is added until small bubbles appear, which indicate that the action of the acid has commenced. Large bubbles are a sign that there is too much acid in the solution, and water must be added. After the lines have been bitten in to a sufficient depth, the article is taken out of the bath and washed in water before the asphalt varnish is removed. Etching at different

depths, to obtain the effect of perspective, as practised in copper, requires greater practice and discrimination.

Ivory is etched in similar manner, by covering the whole surface with lithographers' varnish, tracing the design on it with an etching needle, and afterward immersing it in the acid. The etched design, after the varnish has been removed, appears a dead white; but the grooves can be filled up with any color.

#### RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM IN ART.

##### I.

SYMBOLISM in coloring and object was understood and felt by the ancient masters of art, and it was not until the close of the Middle Ages that painters ventured to disobey the rules. With the present revival of art, close attention is again being paid to these rules. They are of the first importance in every branch of decoration, and in emblematical ornament and illuminated writing especially. The modern student will find that by mastering the code he will be able to understand not only the outward and visible meaning of a picture, but also many subtle and beautiful details, that would otherwise escape observation.

In sacred illuminations, certain colors were always appropriated to certain personages, and all heavenly virtues had their significant shades, all base passions their own symbolical tints. In coloring, gold is considered of the first importance. It represents the sun, the Supreme Deity, glory, faith, marriage. When the illumination is of letters, unadorned with backgrounds, it should be used only upon the letters forming the names of the three Persons of the Trinity, or about any words that symbolize the Godhead. Any of the peculiar symbols of Christ or the Holy Spirit, such as the Crown of Thorns, The Lamb, The White Dove, may be enclosed in frameworks on backgrounds of gold, and words referring to heaven or to the archangels and angels can be either enclosed in gold frames, or have the blue (their right color) largely ornamented with gold and stars of gold, illuminated, or rather raised, upon that color, stars being one of the emblems of angels.

Yellow bears some resemblance to gold in its application, though it is employed in representing both good and bad symbolical meanings. In a good sense, it is looked upon as a symbol of marriage, and is, therefore, used about the garments of St. Joseph; also as a symbol of faith and of the goodness of God. In a bad sense, it means jealousy and deceit, dingy yellow being the color employed about the garments of Ananias and Sapphira, and about the raiment of Judas.

Blue has many significations, all typical of heavenly attributes. It is the color of heaven, and signifies heavenly rest, truth, constancy, adoption, peace, fidelity, holiness, and remembrance. It was one of the colors selected for the curtains of the Tabernacle, and its presence there was intended to denote the hope of heaven enshrined in an earthly temple.

This color is generally used by ancient limners only about the garments of Christ and the Virgin Mary in any large quantities, blue and white being peculiarly the Virgin's colors. St. John the Evangelist is the only apostle that is ever painted with blue garments, but in portraying angels and archangels and all the heavenly host, blue can be used; it is only about the raiment of earthly persons that blue is not employed.

The exact shade of the color that was used by the Israelites seems a matter of doubt. Josephus considered the Hebrew word blue to mean a lighter tint than we use, but the ecclesiastical color has always been a deep sapphire blue, best made by using the real ultramarine. Blue is considered of the first value in colors, that is to say, when illuminating a text; blue must be employed about the words that relate to any of the divine personages, without mentioning their titles.

Red, crimson, ruby, fire color, have all the same symbols. They signify Divine love, the Holy Spirit as a creative power, royalty, heat, protection. Heavenly crowns granted to martyred saints are generally formed of white and red roses, as the red, or color of blood, shows redemption and love, and white, innocence. Scarlet is used to denote royalty more than the other shades of red, but both crimson and scarlet are employed to denote divine vengeance and punishment.

Human hate, war, blood, and all iniquities are also typified by these colors; and red and black used together are the colors typical of hell and the devil.

Red is of secondary value when used about texts, but